795 respect the Sanusi family they, nevertheless, wear their
•977 religion lightly. An informant, speaking of the merits and
829 demerits of the conservative Muslim Brethern Association, said that "you should never listen to a holy man, for he will lead you straight to hell!" But upon meeting any member of the [576] Sanusi family, all Bedouins greet him by kissing his hand. [978] Besides a show of deference, this ritual act, in theory, transfers baraka from al-Sanusi to the layman.

648 The citizenship exemptions granted the Bedouins by
641 Muhammad 'Ali have been rescinded by Abd al-Nasser. This has been one aspect of his program to imbue the Bedouin with political consciousness and promote participation in the nation-state. The Bedouins say that this is the way it should be: they want the right to own land and to accept the responsibility of defending the homeland. But they still do [651] not pay land taxes, and they feel justified in this because the desert "is very poor soil, and not like that of the Nile." Nor do they always heed the call to military duty, though they insist that they do.

648 Egyptian land reform laws would be impractical, or
179 impossible to apply, in al-Qasr. In the Nile Valley, such
423 laws were necessary. The majority of the Egyptian peasants can survive on less than one acre of land, and farms of under five acres comprise 44 per cent of the agricultural land area in the Nile Valley (Warriner 1962:204). Plots this

695 below will show how a "bad oath" can work directly on the
784 false witness.

784 Divine sanctions enter into other aspects of the
626 Bedouin judicial process and function to maintain social
626 control in al-Qasr. If we can speak of a standard, or
681 minimal sanction, in Bedouin law it would be the dhabiiha and 10 L.E. In any case, however small the offence might be, the litigant found to be in the wrong will have this judgment made against him. But in almost every case "the
[788] party who takes his rights" will refuse the dhabiiha and
[292] 10 L.E. and insist instead upon a ritual three cups of tea. An individual refuses the dhabiiha as an act of brotherhood and thanksgiving that the quarrel has been settled. The Bedouins point out the practical factor that very few men in al-Qasr can afford to part with even one lamb. On the
626 other hand, in more serious cases, such as homicide, which
681 occur in the external sphere of political relations and
682 threaten to disintegrate the political community, the parties
264 involved will actually eat a whole meal together. In this case, the dhabiiha is accepted, for the act of commensality is deemed necessary for reconciliation.

626 But whether or not conflict is concluded by a simple
182 ritual or a large feast, the prevailing mood is one of
• 771 gratitude that the secular bonds of brotherhood and a pre-ordained sacred order have been maintained. The Bedouin

626 process of conflict regulation is ritually sanctioned and
182 the political order sacralized in a public way at the con-
•771 clusion of litigation when the parties involved and the
'aqila read the Fatiha (the first sura of the Quran). For
671 the Bedouins, the 'awaiyid is the enactment of the word of
771 God, and the man who follows the 'awaiyid follows the command-
771 ments of God. One 'aqila speaking of the final authority which
776 directs Bedouin society said this:
577

> God knows all things. God made the world and gave man a brain with which to think. Therefore, he gave man two choices: the good, and the bad. If a man follows the good, he does not steal, kill, or lie. God gave us Muhammad the Messenger, and he taught the ignorant to follow the word of God. You are an educated man, and so you must choose the good path and follow it. I do not read but I follow the Quran.

577 It follows, then, that "the good man" represents an
183 important Bedouin cultural ideal which is legitimated by
771 reference to the sacred. The practice of this ideal leads
[829] to "the good society." Another 'aqila, in reply to my question concerning the definition of a "good man," answered:

> A good man should follow God, and through this he will be a perfect man because such a man could make no mistakes. You could find no better person than this. The good man fasts, prays, makes the pilgrimage, and helps the poor. He avoids stealing and lying; these are the most important things to avoid . . . All men aim to do good. Some men think that they are doing good, but they cannot tell good from bad: this is the origin of badness . . . A man aims to do good so that the Arabs will thank him for it. The Arabs (i.e. the man's fellow Bedouins) will say that he is doing good and that he is following the good path.

According to this 'aqila, the "good man" is the "good Muslim" who observes the pillars of Islam (fasting, praying, making the pilgrimage, and alms-giving). Also, the "good man" does not steal or lie, and this leads, importantly enough, to social accord.

In light of the preceding discussion of authority and law, we can now offer a description of the Bedouin judicial process in action. Southall (1956:121-151) has drawn the distinction between internal and external delicts on the bases of kinds of sanctions rendered, and whether or not chiefly authority mediates conflict. Such a distinction can be only partially applied in the case of the Bedouins of the Western Desert. The kind of sanctions operating in the internal political system do differ from those applied in the external political system, though not to the same degree which is true of Southall's Alurland. On the other hand, since Bedouin society, lacking political centralization, cannot be characterized as a segmentary state with distinct spheres of authority at successive levels of the lineage structure, the intervention or non-intervention of chiefly adjudication and decision-making cannot serve as a basis for differentiating political action. Rather, the lone political office of the 'aqila involves itself in all arbitration which cannot be successfully concluded by the mechanism of familial authority. There are just two exceptions which apply to this latter statement:

554 The rajal khair, then, is a broker in social relation-
571 ships, a manipulator of loyalties. As a member of the "status
627 group," he can afford to spend time and money in courting his fellow tribesmen, and, as a result, can accrue prestige and loyalty. This role, like that of the 'aqila, is a secular
[681] one. The sanctions which it controls are as economical as those of the 'aqila's are political. In this sense, they are differentiated from the role of rajal saalih whose sanctions are sacred in nature.

554 The traditional role which we define as that of the
792 rajal saalih, "the holy man," was probably much more important
[798] in the past than it is today. In al-Qasr, there are only two rajal saalih who share in traditional power: the one is a resident of al-Qasr proper, and the other, a member of the prestigious Sanusi family, lives near Marsa Matruh.

The rajal saalih of al-Qasr, i.e. the local "holy man," is assured of status because he is an ashraf, one who claims descent from the family of the Prophet. He is also a
[561] member of the elder age-set, and while he is not rich, he cannot be considered poor. Though the "holy man" al-Sanusi
[793] lives near Matruh, he participates in the authority structure of al-Qasr and is a member of the "status group." He is sometimes referred to as rajal saalih kabir, "a great holy man," by virtue of his Sanusi heritage.

• [771] The relative unimportance of this role as compared to that of the rajal khair in conflict regulation is a function

of the Bedouin attitude, or lack of it, toward religion. Since the time of Muhammad, the Bedouins have been considered notoriously bad Muslims. Today, the Bedouins tend to joke about their lack of zeal, and often point out that "holy men" are not to be trusted.[2] This is seen in Sa'adi behavior toward the Marabtin tribes who are their vassals. Theoretically, the Marabtin who trace descent to the Prophet and might be considered "sacred Tribes" should be respected by the "secular" Sa'adi tribes. But the Sa'adi of al-Qasr tend to deride the Marabit. For instance, the "holy man" of al-Qasr, 'Amm Salih, is a Marabit and well-known for his ability to successfully mediate in conflict situations. But one informant, pointing out this gift which 'Amm Salih possesses, said: "Amm Salih is a good man, he is not a Marabit." But 'Amm Salih identifies himself as a "rajal saalih" and a "Marabit"; he sees no role conflict here.

The Bedouins also joke about the manner in which they practice the "pillars of Islam." Especially, they make light of the fact that they are irregular in mosque attendance. They say, with a slight smile, "we pray in the desert." A common way for an interview to end was by an informant rising and saying: "Now I must wash for prayers." This happened

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[2] Professor Abou-Zeid also notes this trait in his study of the Bedouin near Sallum, on the Libyan border (1966:248).

771 at any time of the day! As one Bedouin put it: "According to the idea of goodness (salih), we are not good. This is because we do not pray, we are part-timers in prayer."

554 792 778 A good rajal saalih is considered by the Bedouin to have a special "blessing" (baraka), a concept somewhat equivalent to that of mana. Someone such as 'Amm Salih is thought to have baraka, and this type of power naturally increases his influence and enhances his status. The following [124] informant's account brings this out and shows something of the magico-religious element at work in Bedouin power relations.

[539] Hajj 'Ali does not believe in magic but he respects the "holy man" like anyone else. He owns a field from which are taken stones for building houses. One day he saw some men taking stones from this field. They were digging near a well so that the well would not be able to hold water after they had finished. Hajj 'Ali told the men to stop digging. One man answered: "I am cutting these stones for the Jaraira family (the family of 'Amm Salih), and only a few more and we will be finished." Hajj 'Ali replied: "For the Jaraira as for anyone else, we don't favor anyone, so stop the work now." Then Hajj 'Ali went home, never thinking that they would cause any trouble for him, and he was afraid of no harm. He slept and he had a dream. [787] In the dream he saw three of the Jaraira family, all of whom were dead and whom he had known in life. In the dream they only watched him and spoke no words. In the morning Hajj 'Ali went to the co-operative society's office and there he met 'Amm Salih. He said to him: "'Amm Salih, I want to tell you something." Then he related the whole story to him, and said: "I had no fear that you would do me any harm. But last night I saw your relatives in my dream; I had not even thought of them yesterday, so they are not the cause of the dream. [828] (The Bedouins believe that dreams reflect, and are connected with, what you saw or did during the day). So come and take all of the stones that you want, even if you are going to build a palace."

advanced" and is assumed "to have authority"; that the "great tradition" is represented in the writings and public actions of the political elite; and that "social prestige is dependent on its adoption (or at least on its profession)" (1962:69). Implicit in von Grunebaum's analysis, and also contained in Redfield's model, is the employment of reference group theory to understand human behavior in society. In the al-Qasr case, I have tried to show that "status group" members repudiate many of the traditional ways of life while at the same time identifying more and more with the Egyptian "status group," the bureaucrats of Marsa Matruh. The implication here is that the Bedouin "status group" is in the process of taking on the values of a new reference group to which they do not yet belong but to which they seek admission.

The bureaucrats of Marsa Matruh, like those of Cairo and Alexandria described by von Grunebaum, represent the "great tradition." The "status group" of al-Qasr while aspiring to the "great tradition" emulate certain of the behavioral traits and expectations of the elite group. For instance, they are conspicuous for their regular attendance at Friday mosque services in Matruh. Merton, who has developed reference group theory, points out that "men frequently orient themselves to groups other than their own in shaping their behavior and evaluations" (1957:234). This type of behavior, or "anticipatory socialization," is the process of taking on

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

or swaying into convulsions. Indeed, it is noticeable that the Orders which permit such practices, notably the 'Arusiya, 'Isawiya, Rifa'iya, and Sa'adiya, so popular in the towns of Libya, have made no converts among the true Bedouin.

It is unnecessary to discuss further the mystical side to the Sanusiya for another reason. The Bedouin of Cyrenaica with whom this book is concerned have only the slightest knowledge of either the religious teachings or the ritual of the Order, and are interested in neither. They belong to the illiterate class of the *Muntasabin*, the simple adherents of the Order who follow its Shaikh personally and politically. It is very seldom, if ever, that the Bedouin know the special prayers and litanies of the Order, and their use of them, if any, is restricted to getting a scribe to write them on paper so that they can sew them up in leather and tie them to their bodies. It is only a tiny educated minority who regularly recite the prayer formulas and litanies. These are the *Ikhwan*, the Brothers of the Order. They live in the lodges of the Order and hold prayer-meetings there. Among the Brothers are some who have been raised to the position of Shaikhs of lodges, generally, in past times, after special training at the University of the Order at Jaghbub oasis, where they have received a diploma from the Head of the Order or from one of his family or inner circle. This inner circle, the *Khawass*, consists vaguely to-day of a few senior members of the Sanusi family and two or three learned Brothers and does not function as a Body, but in the past it was, according to Sayyid Muhammad Idris, an official Council controlling the affairs of the Order and was composed of four Shaikhs of the Order, who were not of the Sanusi family, under the presidency of the Head of the Order, who had to be a member of the founder's family. As Dr. Adams points out,[1] the fact that this inner circle is no longer a determinate Body indicates a change in the character of the Order, a development of its political, to the detriment of its religious, functions. This development has favoured the interests of the Sanusi family to the disadvantage of the Order as a whole.

The *Shaikh al-Tariqa*, Head of the Order, advised in past times by his Council, appoints the Shaikhs of the lodges and these Shaikhs can ordain Brothers and the Brothers can receive

[1] C. C. Adams, 'The Sanusiya Order', *Handbook on Cyrenaica*, 1944, p. 31.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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[P.62]

CHAPTER III

THE SANUSIYA AND THE TRIBES

I

793 619 When the Grand Sanusi came to preach in Cyrenaica he found the kind of society I have outlined: a congeries of tribes without law or effective government, for the Turks had little control over the interior, but with like values and habits and a community of life which crossed tribal boundaries. The Bedouin to [181] whom he preached were simple people living the austere and monotonous life of the tents, with that savage character which has been so often portrayed, but also with those noble qualities which have seldom failed to evoke admiration from those who [177] have lived among them. They were profoundly ignorant about [797] the outside world and also—which is what touched the heart of the Grand Sanusi—about the faith of their fathers, and to this matter I must now return, since the Sanusiya was a missionary Order and can only be understood as such.

771 [799] Though the Bedouin professed Islam before the Grand Sanusi influenced them by his teaching, they were almost totally ignorant of its doctrinal content, rites, or ritual and moral duties, and it is safe to assume that they did not obey its precepts. It is safe to assume this because even to-day, after a century of Sanusiya instruction, the Bedouin perform their religious duties in a very perfunctory way, if at all, and when Muslim law is at variance with tribal custom they follow tribal custom. In saying that they are lax, I do not suggest that they [186] are not very sincere, Muslims. They are proud of being Muslims and consider themselves greatly superior to Christians, while they are contemptuous of Jews. Nevertheless, though they would not belittle, the Cyrenaican Bedouin feel no embarrassment at neglecting, the duties obligatory on every Muslim. The Confession of Faith is known to all and implicitly accepted by all. It imposes no irksome restrictions or tiresome duties. [782] But they almost completely neglect—I speak of the more nomadic sections whom I know best, but it is probably true of most Cyrenaican Bedouin—their daily prayers, a duty which is

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

absolutely obligatory and sinful to omit. I very much doubt whether many of the Bedouin know how to pray in the prescribed manner. As I have mentioned earlier, the Bedouin used to give alms to their zawiyas and in doing so they carried out one of the five major duties of a Muslim, but they regarded these alms as charity rather than legal dues. I have never met an ordinary Bedouin who had been to Mecca, or who even contemplated going there. Nevertheless, however lax they may be in other things, all Cyrenaican Bedouin keep the fast of Ramadan, and in this annual fast is summed up for them, more than in anything else, the obligations and privileges of Islam and its unity and strength. Moreover, although they are negligent Muslims themselves they respect piety in others. Brothers of the Sanusiya Order and religious men in general ought to pray regularly. That is their business and it is very necessary for the well-being of the community and worthy of liberal support, but the Bedouin is an unlettered man, a shepherd, and a warrior, and he has his own affairs to see to. Perhaps the Bedouin make up for their shortcomings by their enthusiasm for the *jihad*, holy war against unbelievers. They consider that they have fulfilled their obligation under this head in ample measure by their long and courageous fight, formally declared a holy war by the Caliph of Islam, against the Italians, the French, and the British. A Bedouin once said to me when I remarked how rarely I had seen Bedouin at prayer: '*nasum wa najhad*', '(but) we fast and we wage holy war'.

It must also be said that it would be an error to suppose that Islam had not, long before the time of the Grand Sanusi, strongly affected the character and custom of the Sulaimid Bedouin. This question, which is far from simple, need not be discussed in the present account and it is only necessary to note that the Bedouin assume that their customs are Muslim customs. It would also be a questionable judgement to assert that the Bedouin of Cyrenaica are not religious because they do not pay the same attention to outward ritual as do townspeople and peasants, for piety and holiness, as we have often been admonished, are not the same. The Bedouin certainly have a profound faith in God and trust in the destiny He has prepared for them and this faith and trust enhance that superb dignity

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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which often contrasts so strikingly with their poverty and rags and what Paolo Della Cella describes as their 'excessive and habitual filth'.[1]

It is important that it should be understood that the Bedouin of Cyrenaica were Muslim, at any rate by allegiance if not by instruction, before the Grand Sanusi propagated the faith among them, because otherwise it would be difficult to account for their ready acceptance of his guidance. He was not appealing to a pagan people to embrace Islam, but to a Muslim people to show in their lives the faith they professed. It was his achievement to have given their religion organized form and direction, and by so doing to have exercised a persistent and transformative influence on their morals; for if the Bedouin neglect religious duties to-day and are by peasant and urban standards ignorant, loud, and lawless, it can be imagined that they were troublesome indeed before the Grand Sanusi and Sayyid al-Mahdi had taught them something of the duties of their faith and had softened the harshness of their customs. That the Sanusiya made a big difference to their way of life cannot be doubted. Shaikh Muhammad 'Uthman tells us of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica that 'They are very good-natured and of a cheerful disposition. They have a profound reverence for the Shaikh Sidi al-Mahdi, and they fear God and His Prophet. One is in perfect security among them; a stranger, an explorer, has he even loads of gold or silver, has nothing to fear from them.' He also says, and for the same reason, that there were peace and security for caravans in the Wadai and in those parts of the Sahara where the Sanusiya was established; and he adds that Sayyid al-Mahdi had achieved these remarkable results by the exercise of spiritual authority only, and not by force, 'as an Amir or Sultan would have done'. As for the citizens of Banghazi, of whom the Tunisian traveller had a very poor opinion, he says that they were proud, inhospitable, and lazy, and would still have been plunged in ignorance and without a vestige of civilization or of religious education 'if the goodness of God had not sent them the Sanusiya fraternity, which contributed much to their moral regeneration'.[2] Even Italian authors have to admit that the Sanusiya did much for the people

[1] Op. cit., p. 109.
[2] Op. cit., pp. 52, 59, 62, and 116–17.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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of Cyrenaica.[1] The Bedouin remember with gratitude, as I have often heard them declare, the moral and cultural benefits brought to them by the Order. If they have fallen from the low religious and literary standards to which the Sanusiya raised a fraction of them it is due to the virtual extinction of its teaching office during their long struggle with the Italians.

II

The Bedouin the Grand Sanusi found in Cyrenaica were not only Muslims but also inveterate devotees of saints, the *Marabtin* (sing. *Marabat*) or Marabouts, as they are called in European accounts of North Africa, and the Grand Sanusi was in the long tradition of these holy men. Therefore, although I have touched on the matter in Chapter I, I need not excuse myself for treating it again in its Cyrenaican context, for Bedouin attachment to the Sanusiya springs from their personal devotion to the Grand Sanusi and his family, and not the other way round, and the Grand Sanusi derived his sanctity, and thereby his power, from the fact that he was a Marabout. The Bedouin are familiar with saints and ignorant of Orders. To them the Grand Sanusi was a saint and wonderworker, and a man with *baraka*, an ample measure of God's grace which flowed through him to ordinary folk; but there was nothing extraordinary about him. They knew his kind of old. When he died his tomb became a shrine, the largest and richest in Cyrenaica it is true, but only one among very many, dating from the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad, through the Martyrs who were killed fighting for the faith in Cyrenaica, to the pious and learned men of yesterday and the day before. His successors, by their kinship with him, and in virtue of their spiritual legacy from him, became heirs to his *baraka*; and so, to a lesser degree, have the heirs of the other religious teachers who came to Cyrenaica from the west, who died and were buried there, and whose descendants are the *Marabtin bil baraka* lineages of to-day. The authority the Grand Sanusi had over the Bedouin of Arabia and North Africa can be parallelled by the careers of many holy

[1] Giuseppe Macaluso, *Turchi, Senussi e Italiani in Libia*, 1930, p. 32; Giglio, op. cit., p. 22; and Arcangelo Ghisleri (quoting Andrea Pedretti), *Tripolitania e Cirenaica dal Mediterraneo al Sahara*, 1912, p. 132.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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men in North Africa whose families still retain much wealth and influence. It was this Marabout status of the Grand Sanusi in the eyes of the Bedouin which won him their respect: it was the organization of the Sanusiya Order, an organization the earlier Marabouts did not have, which enabled him to turn this respect into a theocracy.

There is more than one explanation of the origin of the word *'Marabat'*. That generally accepted is that it derives from the root RBT, to bind, and hence from *'ribat'*, a fortified convent, inhabited by warrior-monks, found on the marches of Islam in its early days of expansion by arms. The word later became attached to the tribes which settled in Andalousia under the leadership of the Saharan tribe of the Sanhaja and was corrupted into the European 'Almoravides'. After the fall of the Sanhaja dynasty in the twelfth century part of the *Marabtin* tribes fell back into central and southern Morocco, whence many individuals moved eastwards. Some settled in Cyrenaica, generally on their return from the pilgrimage to Mecca, and their fanaticism, asceticism, ability to read and write, and thaumaturgic powers, impressed the simple Bedouin, who accepted them as holy men and magicians and used them to write charms, to perform religious rites, and to act as mediators in inter-tribal disputes. Sometimes, as we have seen, these men founded lineages which, dwelling under the shadow of their saintly forbears, became nuclei of social agglomerations which have developed in course of time into tribal groups, thus taking the shape of the tribal society in which they lived. The word *'Marabtin'* thus came to mean holy men (and their tombs) and then, in addition, tribes tracing their descent, or supposed descent, from these holy men and also, finally, in Cyrenaica, tribes who are clients of the great *Sa'adi* tribes which own the earth and water.

Some of the better known of the Cyrenaican saints, but by no means all, have gleaming white cupolas, supported by four walls, erected over their tombs, and inside the walls is a *tub*, a wooden box, over the grave, and this is covered with coloured cloth on which are inscribed passages from the Koran. Inside also are often a few pages from sacred books, occasionally a few small coins given by the local Bedouin, and any property, such as tents or ploughs, the Bedouin have wished to deposit in a

593 613 tegral part of "the one body"; events which affect a man in this context lie outside a father's field of jurisdiction. The political authority vested in a corporation acts to circumscribe the authority of persons in other fields.

Other rights stem from political membership. As a person with a defined position in a lineage corporation, a man has the right to use the natural resources of its territory. His father, although he instructs his son where to plough and when to water the animals, cannot deny him access to wells, pastures and ploughland. Economically, a son is independent to this extent, although his ability to exploit his right to the natural resources is restricted by his father's control of animals. Ultimately, however, this restriction cannot amount to stultification, because a man has the right to 613 422 735 demand food. In practice, a poor man staves off hunger with donations from this or that individual, and superficially it appears that he is dependent on the personal charity of his fellowmen. This is not so, for what is implicit is that the parcels of wealth controlled by individuals are the possessions of the corporation. It is not accidental that poor people do not go hungry. During my entire stay among the Bedouin I never saw one of them beg or [556] suffer hunger, however marginal the diet of many. Clearly, those with a surplus can and do use it for personal advantage, but the extent to which they can do so is circumscribed by the legal claims which members of a corporation have on the parcels of moveable property held by each of them.

613 421 428 Control over the wealth, whether it be animals or the procreative functions of women, rests, in the final analysis, in a corporation. Inheritance laws specify that women are not legal heirs,[8] and that all male children are [562] equal heirs. Women do, in fact, come to control property, and it is rare that [593] wealth is equally divided among male heirs. The precise details of inheritance may partly be decided by a father, but he is limited in his actions. Most of the time inheritance disputes are not of the kind which require action by the corporate group; a case which occured while I was resident with the Bedouin did, however, invoke immediate action. A man, who had left the desert to live in a village on the plateau, had only one daughter. He made it known that he intended to will his entire property to his daughter. When the news was brought to the camps of his fellow agnates, there was great consternation, because, as became clear in their lengthy discussions, the threat now existed that a substantial parcel of property would be removed from the group, a threat made real by the proposed marriage of the daughter [584] to a man of another tribe. The court would have to recognise the daughter's right to some of the property, and the members of the group reluctantly had to concede that there was little they could do about this, but they had one [593] action left to them — they decided that her nearest agnate should demand [584] her in marriage. Usually, the choice of husband for a daughter is a decision

[8] The Bedouin are Sunni Muslims, and, as Samusi, belong to the Maliki school in [797] legal matters. According to court law, women are heirs. However, actual Bedouin [795] practice is contrary to law. For, if women were permitted to inherit, since many marry [671] outside the corporation into which they were born, they could alienate its resources.

9: Murray E.K-3,4 (ca. 1910-1935) 1935 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
Egypt

Chapter XVI

THE WESTERN BEDOUIN (EL MUGHARBA)[1]

"The Moor is of a free and open nature."—Othello.

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General Remarks—The Arab and the Libyan—The Sa'adi Tribes and the Murabitin—Bedouins of the Northern Littoral—Awlad 'Ali—Jawabis—Jumei'at—Samalus—Shiheibat.

Sinai has been called an "epitome of Arabia", and the pilgrim certainly feels well on the way to Mecca as soon as he crosses the Suez Canal, but it is equally true that Algiers is not so very far west of the "Arab's Gate" at Alexandria. The skies of Mariut are coloured with much the same blue as those of Andalusia, and, though the Sierras are lacking, the historian instinctively begins to look for the Alhambra as soon as he crosses the causeway to Amriya. The reason is not so very far to seek, there is more of the Libyan than the Arab in the tribes that hardly a century ago flooded back into Egypt from Cyrenaica. Yet in spite of numerous resemblances, these two races are divided as the goats from the sheep by this essential difference that while the "Berbers"[2] are religious and often superstitious (traits of a converted race), his religion sits so lightly on the Arab that he has almost reverted to his early paganism. But though this is true, it is far from obvious, and a traveller will not find anyone in the Western Desert to admit that he is not of pure Arab descent.

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This snobbishness was evident so long ago as the time of Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406), who found it advisable to represent the Tuareg, as descended from a respectable but mythical Arab conqueror, Ifrikias ibn Sufi. Ibn Khaldun asserts that when Ifrikias himself returned to Arabia, the Ketama and Sanhaja tribes remained behind and became absorbed in the people of the country. All this is pure

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[1] Mugharba means literally "westerners", and is used in Egypt to denote generally all the Bedouin west of the Nile. But there is a tribe in Cyrenaica who content themselves with this simple title, and so confuse the issue.

[2] All the indigenous races of North Africa are lumped together under this barbarian title by the Arab historians.